REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 1, 3-6, 11, 13-17, 19-22 and cancels claims 2, 7-10, 12, 18 and 23-26. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 1, 3-6, 11, 13-17 and 19-22.

In paragraph 1 of the Office Action the Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 CFR §1.84(h)(5). Filed on even date herewith are Proposed Drawing Corrections. Approval of the Proposed Drawing Corrections is respectfully requested. Therefore, this objection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

The disclosures stand objected to due to informalities noted by the Examiner. Amendments were made throughout the specification to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner and other grammatical and editorial errors discovered upon review. Therefore, this objection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 5, 6 and 17 stand objected to due to informalities noted by the Examiner in paragraph 4 of the Office Action. Amendments were made throughout claims 1, 5, 6 and 17 to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner. Therefore, this objection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-16 and 23-26 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regards as their invention. As indicated above, claims 2, 7-10, 12 and 23-26 were canceled. Therefore, this rejection with respect to claims 2, 7-10, 12 and 23-26 is rendered moot. Various amendments were made throughout claims 1, 3-6 and 13-16 to bring them into conformity with the requirements of 35 USC §112, second

paragraph. Therefore, this rejection with respect to claims 1, 3-6 and 13-16 is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Specifically, amendments were made throughout claims 1, 3-6 and 13-16 to overcome the objections noted by the Examiner in the Office Action.

Claims 1-4, 10-14, 17-20 and 23 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bermon (U.S. Patent No. 5,946,212); and claims 7-9 and 26 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bermon in view of Hoffman (U.S. Patent No. 5,905,666). As indicated above, claims 2, 7-10, 12, 18, 23 and 26 were canceled. Therefore, these rejections with respect to claims 2, 7-10, 12, 18, 23 and 26 is rendered moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections with respect to claims 2, 7-10, 12, 18, 23 and 26 is respectfully requested.

The above noted rejection with respect to the remaining claims 1, 3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 as being unpatentable over Bermon taken individually or in combination with Hoffman is traversed for the following reasons. Applicants submit that the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in claims 1, 3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 are not taught or suggested by Bermon or Hoffman whether taken individually or in combination with each other or any of the other references of record. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Amendments were made to each of the claims to more clearly recite the features of the present invention not taught or suggested by any of the references of record whether taken individually or in combination with each other. Particularly, amendments were made to each of the independent

claims so as to more clearly recite that the present invention is directed to a method and apparatus of assisting in forming plans of measures for management reforms.

As recited in the claims the present invention includes storing in a data storage device a general business-operation-index group(f) including a plurality of indexes indicating the condition of business operation of an enterprise, a general plan-of-measures group(x) including a plurality of plans of measures, each of which is information showing how to deal with the condition indicated by the respective indexes included in said general business-operation-index group, and the first correlation-information group(Mm) including a plurality of correlation information, each of which defines the correlation between the respective indexes included in the general business-operation-index group and the respective plans of measures included in the general plan-of-measures group,, risk level information indicating levels of risk caused when each plan of measures is executed, and investment information indicating investment amount necessary to execute the measure included in the general plan-of-measures, by comparing business operation index data (A) of the enterprise to be reformed and the general business-operation index group, producing a problem-index group by extracting, as problem indexes indicating problems in the business operations to be improved, one or more business operation indexes from the general operation-index group and stored in the data storage device, accepting input of information indicating acceptable risk level, producing the second correlation-information group (Mm') by extracting correlation information which relates to the problem indexes included in the problem-index group, and

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which relates to a plan-of measures having a lower risk level than the inputted risk level from the first correlation-information group, accepting input of gross investment to be invested to the management reform, and producing a potential plan-of-measures group(x') by selecting one or more plans of measures which relates to the second correlation-information group and which has a lower gross investment than the inputted investment amount from the general plan-of-measures group.

Further, as recited in the claims the present invention includes outputting the resultant one or more potential plans of measures included in the potential plans-of-measures group, further storing risk level information indicating levels of risk caused when the each plan of measures included in the general plan-of-measures group is executed in the data storage device, accepting input of information designating the acceptable risk level by the information processor, and producing the second correlation-information group by extracting information which define correlation relating to the problem indexes and to plans of measures having a risk level equal or lower than the input risk level, from the first correlation-information group.

Unique according to the present invention is that when planning measures to reform business management by a user, the system carries out analysis of the management and drafts countermeasures based on the input of current data of the enterprise to be reformed. In this case, as a condition to narrow the candidate of measures, a user inputs a risk level, and a gross investment into the system. The system displays candidates of the measures in the display. Further, the user can change the candidate search condition.

Thus, the system can support the user to select the most suitable measures from various candidate measures.

The above described features of the present invention now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by any of the references of record whether taken individually or in combination with each other. Particularly the above described features of the present invention now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by Bermon or Hoffman whether taken individually or in combination with each other or any of the other references of record.

Bermon teaches a computer implemented method which provides for capacity planning in manufacturing environments. Particularly, Bermon teaches that parallel, unrelated tools process the same operations at different rates and preferences is allowed for sequences in which those tools are selected to accommodate the workload. As per Bermon the primary, secondary, etc. tool groups in each cascade set are explicitly kept track of in order to enable the correct penalty function to be associated with the appropriate tool group. The end user may also interact with the input data through a Menu Program or through a Graphical User Interface (GUI) and modify the data for "what-if" analyses.

The present invention as recited in the claims differs from substantially from that taught by Bermon being in the present invention when planning measures to reform business management by a user, the system carries out analysis of the management and drafts countermeasures based on the input of current data of the enterprise to be reformed. According to the present invention, as a condition to narrow the candidate of measures, a user inputs a

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risk level, and a gross investment into the system, the system displays candidates of the measures in the display and the user can change the candidate search condition, thereby allowing the system to support the user to select the most suitable measures from various candidate measures. Such features are clearly not taught or suggested by Bermon.

Thus, Bermon fails to teach or suggest <u>storing in a data storage device a general business-operation-index group(f) including a plurality of indexes indicating the condition of business operation of an enterprise, a general plan-of-measures group(x) including a plurality of plans of measures, each of which is information showing how to deal with the condition indicated by the respective indexes included in said general business-operation-index group, and the first correlation-information group(Mm) including a plurality of correlation information, each of which defines the correlation between the respective indexes included in the general business-operation-index group and the respective plans of measures included in the general plan-of-measures group,, risk level information indicating levels of risk caused when each plan of measures is executed, and investment information indicating investment amount necessary to execute the measure included in the general plan-of-measures</u> as recited in the claims.

Further, Bermon fails to teach or suggest <u>by comparing business operation index data (A) of the enterprise to be reformed and the general business-operation index group, producing a problem-index group by extracting, as problem indexes indicating problems in the business operations to be improved, one or more business operation indexes from the general operation-index group and stored in the data storage device; accepting input</u>

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of information indicating acceptable risk level; and producing the second correlation-information group (Mm') by extracting correlation information which relates to the problem indexes included in the problem-index group, and which relates to a plan-of measures having a lower risk level than the inputted risk level from the first correlation-information group as recited in the claims.

Still further, Bermon fails to teach or suggest outputting the resultant one or more potential plans of measures included in the potential plans-of-measures group; further storing risk level information indicating levels of risk caused when the each plan of measures included in the general plan-of-measures group is executed in the data storage device; accepting input of information designating the acceptable risk level by the information processor; and producing the second correlation-information group by extracting information which define correlation relating to the problem indexes and to plans of measures having a risk level equal or lower than the input risk level, from the first correlation-information group as recited in the claims.

Therefore, as is clear from above, the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in claims 1, 3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20are not taught or suggested by Bermon. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC §103(a) rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 as being unpatentable over Bermon is respectfully requested.

The above noted deficiencies of Bermon are not supplied by any of the other references of record namely Hoffman. Therefore, combining Bermon with Hoffman still fails to teach or suggest the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in the claims.

Hoffman teaches a method, system, and data structure for use in a recording medium such as a memory where a great deal of multiplication of large, sparse matrices is performed. The method as taught by Hoffman includes the steps of creating a first submatrix block from non-zero terms of a sparse matrix, such that all of the terms within a given column of the submatrix block are formed of a respective column of the sparse matrix, creating a corresponding second index submatrix block of the same dimensions as the first block, such that each term of the second block identifies the position of the corresponding term of the first block within the sparse matrix, in terms of a row and column index. As per Hoffman reordering of terms of the first and second blocks correspondingly is performed as necessary to produce a final configuration within the first and second blocks such that all of the row indices within any given row of the second block are distinct.

As is clear from the above, the above described deficiencies of Bermon are not supplied by Hoffman. Thus, combining the teachings of Bermon and Hoffman in the manner suggested by the Examiner in the Office Action still fails to teach or suggest the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in the claims. Accordingly, the same arguments presented above with respect to Bermon apply as well to Hoffman.

Therefore, the combination of Bermon and fails to teach or suggest the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in claims 1, 3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication in paragraph 8 of the Office Action that claims 5, 6, 15, 16, 21, 22, 24 and 25 would be

allowable of rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Amendments were made to claims 5, 6, 15, 16, 21, 22, 24 and 25 to place them in condition for allowance including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore claims 5, 6, 15, 16, 21, 22, 24 and 25 are in condition for allowance as per the Examiner.
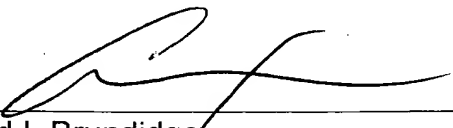
The remaining references of record have been studied. Applicants submit that they do not supply any of the deficiencies noted above with respect to the references utilized in the rejection of claims 1-4, 7-14, 17-20, 23 and 26.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants submit that claims 1, 3-6, 11, 13-17 and 19-22 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 1, 3-6, 11, 13-17 and 19-22 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (566.40719X00).

Respectfully submitted,

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